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Hindus
Muslims

ing of these variant customs quite a stimulating, though somewhat tedious, task; but a full ethnographic record of them will be out of place here, and only a broad outline of the essentials will be presented, to illustrate their place in the socio-religious life of the Hindus. As the Muslims differ from the Hindus vitally in respect of their *rites de passage* their observances will be described separately.

Birth. On the birth of a child the mother, as well as other members of the family, is ritually impure. On the third or fifth day after the birth the *purudu* rites are performed which remove the ritual impurity of all members of the family except the mother. The mother continues to be ritually impure for twenty-one to thirty days. On the twenty-first day—in some castes on the thirtieth day—the name-giving ceremony of the child takes place. The mother is bathed. The child's head is shaved, and it is put in a cradle. If it is the first child, or the first son, relations from other villages are also invited to participate in the name-giving ceremony. Friends and neighbours from the village itself are always invited. Women sing songs suitable for the occasion. If an ancestor is believed to have taken re-birth the newborn is named after him; otherwise the elders, after mutual consultation or at the suggestion of an important and influential relation, decide upon a name for the child. The name is announced to the assembly of men and women present. Singing is continued for some time longer. The ceremony ends with a feast for relations and some very special friends.

The Brahmin may be consulted for his astrological predictions regarding the future of the child, and also regarding the implications of the position of the stars at the time of birth for the members of the family. On this occasion the Komtis, the Reddi agriculturists as well as other higher caste Hindus with urban contacts may also invite him. Women from the barber's caste act as midwives among all the clean castes; untouchables manage with experienced women from their respective castes. Services of four other castes are essential: the barber for shaving the child's head, the washerman for washing the linen and clothes before the twenty-first day ceremony, the potter for the supply of new pots for ritual purification, and Madigas for playing musical instruments. Payments for these services are prescribed by tradition; and are both in cash and kind.

RITUAL STRUCTURE

844 Among the Muslims an expectant mother is sent for the birth of her first child to her parents; subsequent deliveries generally take place in her own home. During her confinement she is attended by a professional midwife. An amulet is often tied to the
846 mother's waist to facilitate delivery. Within a few hours of its birth the child is bathed and clothed. His grandfather or an elderly relation says the prayers. A date is then dipped in honey and a drop or two of that honey is put into the mouth of the newborn child. Milk should not be given to the child before this has been done. On the sixth day the *chhatti* ceremony is performed.
[451] For this relations from both mother's and father's side are invited. They bring with them gifts for the child, comprising of sets of new clothes, dolls and playthings and possibly a silver spoon. The child
553 is dressed in new clothes. On the seventh day its head is shaved, and the elders give it a name. Depending on the means of the family, feasts are given to friends and relations on the sixth and seventh days, The mother continues to be out of the normal round of life for forty days. On the fortieth day she is bathed. The midwife is given her remuneration on this day. Once again there is a feast, and presents may be given both to the child and to the mother.

881 *Pre-puberty Rites.* Among the Hindus, the Brahmin and the Komti perform the sacred thread ceremony for the boys before they attain puberty. At these rites the Brahmin priest officiates. The Panch Bramha group of artisan castes also perform this rite; but they do not invite the Brahmin. Their caste-priest conducts the ceremony.

862 In the Muslim community a boy must be circumcised any time between the age of two and ten. A few relations are invited for the occasion, the boy is garlanded and then the operation is performed. It is usual to give small presents to the boy at this time. Another pre-puberty rite is the *bismilla* ceremony done both for
[867] boys and girls. This initiates the child's religious instruction, for from now on it is taught the alphabet and is gradually enabled to read the Koran. In Shamirpet the *bismilla* ceremony is performed for all Muslim children, though relatively few of them learn to read the holy book.

881 *Puberty Rites.* Among the Hindus the girl's first menstruation is attended by elaborate ceremonies. She is secluded for five days, and at the end of this period is bathed and dressed in new clothes.